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EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Thursday, March 27, 2014

***** DAILY HOT LIST *****

Will EPA's proposed water rule help Chesapeake Bay, hurt farmers?

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS A federal move to clarify protections for seasonal upland streams and riparian wetlands would reap benefits for Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake Bay, environmentalists say. But home-builder and agriculture groups counter the measure constitutes a federal "land grab" that would increase the cost of new homes and hurt farmers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers proposed the rule Tuesday to better articulate Clean Water Act protections that became "confusing and complex" under U.S. Supreme Court decisions and Bush Administration directives that curtailed enforcement. "This rule would protect the streams that feed into rivers like the James and the Potomac, and the wetlands that filter pollution from the Chesapeake Bay," Sarah Bucci of Environment Virginia has said. "If we don't protect these critical waters, we can't ensure that any of our waters are fully protected." At issue are upland streams that only flow seasonally or after a rain, which the EPA says would apply to 60 percent of stream miles in this country. About 117 million people, or one out of every three people, get their drinking water from public systems that partly rely on such streams. According to Environment Virginia, loopholes in the Clean Water Act have left 57 percent of streams and millions of acres of wetlands in the commonwealth "at risk of unchecked pollution and development" and compromised drinking water for more than 2 million Virginians.

Aging pipes mean cost overflow

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER The nation's outdated water infrastructure is facing more pricey ruptures and repairs. Tredyffrin Township officials feared there was a problem with the large, pressurized sewer line along Valley Creek in Valley Forge National Historical Park. Two years ago, part of it ruptured. Early last month, a section burst nearby. Their timetable for addressing the issue of ailing pipes could hardly have been more ironic. On March 17, the supervisors approved a \$40,000 study of the line to identify weaknesses. The next morning at 10:45, the pipe broke again, close to the intersection of Routes 252 and 23 in the park. Wastewater and raw sewage escaped at 5,000 gallons a minute. For the pipe to be fixed, the flow had to be shut at the pumping station farther upstream. As a result, wastewater overflowed from the station for more than two days, fouling even more of the creek. In all, an estimated 6.5

million gallons spilled from the 1970s-era line. Tredyffrin is not the only community grappling with busted pipes, or the threat of them. The Valley Forge spill is just the most recent example of the deterioration of the region's - indeed, the country's - aged mains. The nation's water infrastructure, carrying sewage and drinking water, is reaching the end of its useful life, according to a 2012 report by the American Water Works Association. The industry group estimated that expanding and restoring it will cost \$1 trillion in the next 25 years "if we are to maintain current levels of water service." The Northeast's pipes are older than most; some date to the late 1800s. Several experts said the pipe that broke in Tredyffrin - which shares operation of the lines with other Chester County municipalities - was "relatively young." John Brosious, deputy director of the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association, calls the state's pipes "a hidden quandary. You just pray that what's under the ground is working. You don't ever really know until it breaks."

W.Va. gas industry 'an awakening giant'

CHARLESTON GAZETTE CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Antero Resources announced Wednesday that it will supply nearly half of the ethane needed to support the proposed petrochemical complex in Wood County known as project Ascent -- Appalachian Shale Cracker Enterprise. Company President Paul Rady told a crowd of about 70 people at the Marcellus to Manufacturing Conference going on Wednesday and today at the Charleston Civic Center that Marcellus Shale is "an awakening giant." Rady was joined by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and Odebrecht Vice President David Peebles. Odebrecht announced in November that it would explore its options in developing a petrochemical complex that would include an ethane cracker plant, three polyethylene plants and associated infrastructure for water treatment and energy co-generation. In January, Odebrecht announced that it purchased land in Wood County for the project. "We want growth, jobs and prosperity in this region," Rady said about the developments of project Ascent. Antero will supply 30,000 barrels per day of ethane under the tentative agreement. The agreement is contingent on project Ascent moving forward after a multi-year feasibility study. "It's a big step because, without this [ethane supply], you can't go forward. It's a first step. We need a pool of suppliers," Peebles said. "This is a key, critical element when you talk about manufacturing otherwise you're not going to have the polyethylene manufactures need to build."

Virginia Tech experts pinpoint MCHM odors

CHARLESTON GAZETTE CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Researchers at Virginia Tech believe they have pinpointed a form of the chemical MCHM that could be causing licorice-like odors to linger in the region's drinking water long after the January chemical leak that contaminated drinking-water supplies for 300,000 residents in a nine-county region of West Virginia. Using specialized equipment, experts at Virginia Tech's College of Engineering traced the odors to one of MCHM's two chemical structures, or isomers, and analyzed at what levels that form of MCHM could be smelled in the air and estimated what concentrations could be smelled in water. A team led by Virginia Tech environmental engineer Andrea Dietrich estimated the odor threshold for that form of MCHM at 7 parts per billion. That's 100 times less than the levels the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advised were acceptable for people to drink. However, the CDC's 1-part-per-million number remains controversial, and

Dietrich said the continuing odor problems have their own important impacts on residents. "The toxicity aside, annoying odors have a psychological burden," Dietrich said. "Let's hope this chemical doesn't have any toxicity and the CDC is right, but if people are living with it for two or three months, it imparts a fear and a reminder, and it's a psychological burden. If you can smell it, it's still around." Dietrich is an expert on water quality and treatment, as well as on taste and odor assessments of water. After the Freedom Industries chemical leak, she received an emergency grant from the National Science Foundation to study MCHM and its potential impacts, and one focus of the Virginia Tech team is the coal-cleaning chemical's odor...The Virginia Tech findings come just one day after West Virginia American Water revealed new test results that show low levels of MCHM appear to be leaching from the filters at their Elk River treatment plant into drinking water the company pumps into the region's homes and businesses.

Proposed EPA rule to protect streams, wetlands

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE Thousands of miles of headwater streams and wetlands acreage in Pennsylvania and many more across the nation would have pollution and encroachment protections restored under a new Clean Water Act rule the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed Tuesday. The rule would cover most wetlands, smaller headwater streams, and intermittent and ephemeral streams that flow only briefly following rainfalls, imposing stricter federal pollution controls. Outlined in a 371-page document, the proposed rule aims to clear up a dozen years of regulatory confusion created by two complex U.S. Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006 and directives issued by the George W. Bush administration that limited Clean Water Act jurisdiction and enforcement. "We are clarifying protection for the upstream waters that are absolutely vital to downstream communities," EPA administrator Gina McCarthy said in announcing the rule. The rule, citing scientific support, would protect most seasonal and rain-dependent streams, and wetlands that are near or are connected to streams and rivers. Such streams are important for filtering pollution, recharging groundwater and surface waters and providing breeding habitat for fish and wildlife.

McCarthy Defends Water Act Proposal; Funding Block Threatened

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT A proposal by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that would establish a new definition of waters that are subject to federal Clean Water Act protections would not affect any existing agricultural exemptions, according to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. McCarthy, speaking March 26 during a hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said the proposed rule does not take away "a single agricultural exemption that current exists" under federal law. The proposed rule, released March 25, would subject all natural and artificial tributaries as well as wetlands that are adjacent to or near larger downstream waters to federal Clean Water Act protections. The agencies also released an interpretative rule, effective immediately, identifying 53 specific conservation practices intended to protect or improve water quality that will not be subject to dredge-and-fill permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) asked McCarthy whether the proposed rule would require a new Clean Water Act permit to be obtained by farmers or ranchers who use other existing farming and ranching practices or who utilize one of the 53 identified conservation practices in a way that slightly

differs from the definition of those practices as defined by the Agriculture Department's Natural Resources Conservation Service. McCarthy reiterated that the rule does not remove any existing agricultural exemptions and aims to provide clarity to the agricultural community. "Nobody needs to get a permit under this rule should it go forward as proposed that didn't need it today," she said.

Oil train concern prompts disaster readiness survey

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL State disaster planners are surveying northern Delaware's readiness for a crude-by-rail accident, prompted by public and emergency agency concern about risks and the availability of firefighting supplies and gear. Delaware State Fire School Director Robert Newnam noted the fast-moving plan during a House Energy Committee meeting convened in Dover late Wednesday on "Challenges Posed by Crude-by-Rail in Delaware." "We recognize that there is a concern about this," Newnam said. "This is something that's taking place now. The survey is being put together and it's being sent out; we're preparing for workshops. On behalf of the first responders, we're pretty comfortable with where we are now. We just need to tie down some loose ends." Surveys of dozens of fire companies should be completed within 30 days, Newnam said, with planning and training workshops beginning in another 30 days. "We feel it's necessary to address the issue and see what our status is," Newnam said. "Questions have been raised" about the ability of emergency services to deal with a serious train accident. Hundreds of rail tank cars now cross Delaware daily en-route to the Delaware City Refinery, where an estimated 210,000 barrels of upper Midwestern and Canadian crudes are expected to be arriving daily by the end of the year. The rail deliveries end decades of reliance on waterborne crude oil deliveries from overseas. Train delays at rail crossings and reports of derailments and fires elsewhere – including a deadly, derailment in a Quebec town last year – have turned the issue into a local political and public safety concern. Attention has been high in neighborhoods near tracks and at rail crossings used by the trains across northern Delaware, particularly in Newark, where Amtrak's high-speed passenger trains regularly pass long strings of oil cars on adjacent sidings. "The big question is: What happens if something like that goes wrong," said Rep. John Kowalko, D-Newark South, who chairs the energy panel and organized the rail session. He displayed a video of an Amtrak Acela train zooming past crude-laden tanker cars at the start of the session.

White House 'welcomes' natural gas exports

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA The White House has affirmed its support of American natural gas exports as Europe seeks to reduce its dependence on Russian energy supplies. Energy is playing a major role in the conflict in Ukraine. The European Union has denounced Russia for annexing Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and is now looking to the U.S. to strengthen its position. Until now, the Obama administration has been cautious when it comes to exporting liquified natural gas (LNG) to countries it doesn't have a free trade agreement with. The U.S. Department of Energy is required to approve of such deals to make sure they're in the public's best interest. But in a joint statement Wednesday, the White House and the European union said they "welcome the prospect of U.S. LNG exports in the future since additional global supplies will benefit Europe and other strategic partners."... The Marcellus Shale is poised to play a role in the global LNG market. The high production of natural gas in Pennsylvania has produced a glut which caused prices to drop and drilling to slow down in some of the state's gas

fields. The industry hopes exporting Marcellus LNG could stabilize the market. Recently, a Maryland appeals court ruled in favor of a plan by Dominion Resources to export Marcellus LNG from an existing import terminal at Cove Point to India and Japan. The plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Energy back in September and awaits final approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

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Editorial: Shock treatment Thousands of homeowners shocked by wild spikes in their electric bills during the unforgiving winter were victims of a high-tech bait and switch, though a perfectly legal one. That's why Harrisburg officials need to be better consumer advocates. Household budgets hang in the balance, as well as confidence in the state's experiment with electricity competition. New safeguards are needed to protect against sharp increases under variable-rate electricity plans. Following a winter in which demand pushed energy prices to new highs, it's clear that state officials should have set upper limits on such rates - and must do so now. Imposing caps may lead to slightly higher prices per kilowatt, but it will shield consumers from budget-busting hikes down the road. In addition, it makes sense to enable customers to change their electricity suppliers within days, not weeks. Without concrete protections, customers of Peco and other utilities simply won't want to shop, and no one will blame them.

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PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS

Lawmaker to propose Marcellus Shale tax to raise \$ for schools A STATE lawmaker from Philadelphia said he has a plan to generate \$375 million for local school districts without costing taxpayers a dime. Sen. Vincent Hughes, minority chairman of the Appropriations Committee, said yesterday that he would introduce legislation to impose a 5-percent severance tax on natural-gas drilling in the state's Marcellus Shale region. By 2020, Hughes said, the tax would generate more than \$1 billion for education. "Given the status of what's going on in our schools, we need a much more aggressive funding plan put in place," Hughes told the *Daily News*. He is scheduled to announce the legislation today at a rally outside the Philadelphia School District's headquarters. According to Hughes, the tax would generate about \$720 million in 2014-15, of which \$375 million would go to schools. More than half of that would go toward local school districts, \$195 million would be directed to economic development and \$150 million would go to environmental uses in the first year. As natural-gas revenues rise, so would the money for education, but the amount for economic development and the environment would remain flat. Hughes said the money set aside for education would include reinstating the charter-school-reimbursement line item eliminated by the Corbett administration and provide money for a new basic-education funding formula. The proposal, along with a plan outlined by Senate Democrats last month to raise an additional \$300 million for education, would give Philadelphia schools an extra \$236 million next year, he said. Although the plan likely will face an uphill battle in the Republican-controlled Legislature, two other Democrats in the Senate - John Yudichak, of Carbon County, and Judy Schwank, of Berks County - are on board with it.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Proposed EPA rule to protect streams, wetlands Thousands of miles of headwater streams and wetlands acreage in Pennsylvania and many more across the nation would have pollution and encroachment protections restored under a new Clean Water Act rule the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed Tuesday. The rule would cover most wetlands, smaller headwater streams, and intermittent and ephemeral streams that flow only briefly following rainfalls, imposing stricter federal pollution controls. Outlined in a 371-page document, the proposed rule aims to clear up a dozen years of regulatory confusion created by two complex U.S. Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006 and directives issued by the George W. Bush administration that limited Clean Water Act jurisdiction and enforcement. "We are clarifying protection for the upstream waters that are absolutely vital to downstream communities," EPA administrator Gina McCarthy said in announcing the rule. The rule, citing scientific support, would protect most seasonal and rain-dependent streams, and wetlands that are near or are connected to streams and rivers. Such streams are important for filtering pollution, recharging groundwater and surface waters and providing breeding habitat for fish and wildlife.

Ohio bill to curb farm runoff into Lake Erie nears vote COLUMBUS, Ohio -- A bill considered to be a step in the right direction in dealing with toxic algae blooms on Lake Erie is headed for a full Ohio House vote. The bill would take effect Sept. 30, 2017, and would prohibit farm operations consisting of at least 50 noncontiguous acres from applying synthetic or chemical fertilizers to their land unless it is applied by someone certified by the state or working under the

direction of someone who is certified. The bill won unanimous approval of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on Tuesday as it did in the full Senate in January. It is designed to begin reducing the runoff of nutrients, particularly phosphorous, from entering the Lake Erie watershed and working their way to the lake, feeding algae growth that is endangering fishing, drinking water, and tourism. "It is modest improvement, but it is improvement," said Jack Shaner, of the Ohio Environmental Council. "Streams don't know if the phosphorous is coming from fertilizer or manure. Today we got fertilizer. Tomorrow we'll keep going after manure..." Until certification enforcement begins, the bill encourages agricultural operations to voluntarily adopt nutrient management plans that meet certain minimum standards.

Calumet acquires Anchor Drilling Fluids parent for \$235 million The \$235 million sale of a privately held producer of drilling fluids with interests that include the Marcellus and Utica shale plays is expected to close by Monday. Calumet Specialty Products Partners of Indianapolis announced today it planned to acquire ADF Holdings, the parent company of Anchor Drilling Fluids USA of Tulsa, Oklahoma. In its announcement, Calumet said it planned to finance the Anchor acquisition through new debt securities or borrowings under its revolving credit facility. Anchor has about 400 employees and about 30 manufacturing, mixing, storage and distribution facilities in 13 states, which includes those in Cranberry, Pennsylvania; Wellsville, Ohio; and Horseheads, New York. On its website, Anchor calls itself the largest independent drilling and completion fluids company in the country. It has about 250 clients in the Bakken, Barnett, Eagle Ford, Fayetteville, Granite Wash, Haynesville, Marcellus, Niobrara, Permian, Piceance, Uinta and Utica oil and gas plays.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Local governments put drilling fees to variety of uses When Buffalo Township got its first payment of nearly \$59,000 from shale-drilling impact fees under the state's Act 13 law, the Butler County community told state regulators it used the money to reduce taxes. Officials say they put the money and \$54,000 they got last year into the general fund to save residents from a big tax increase and to pay bills, including a tax anticipation loan, because money is tight. "Well, if you say tax reduction, to not raise it equates to almost the same thing," said John K. Haven, chairman of the township supervisors. "It's unfortunate that we couldn't say it's a windfall for us. We had to use it for paying the bills that are already there." Act 13 of 2012, which among other things imposed fees on well owners that go mostly to communities with drilling, laid out 13 categories for approved use of the money, ranging from road and water projects to tax reductions, environmental programs and saving it for big purchases. Paying off loans isn't among them. When lawmakers crafted the law, they did not include a mechanism to verify how municipalities say they spend the roughly \$100 million doled out each year. They said they made the list of acceptable uses very general to give local officials leeway. Sen. Tim Solobay, D-Canonsburg, a proponent of the law, said "creative reporting" such as the Buffalo Township example might prompt more scrutiny, such as random audits. Auditor General Eugene DePasquale said on Wednesday his office plans to review how towns are spending their drilling money but is waiting until they've spent a few years' worth.

Residents urge council to revise drilling regulations A group of Murrys ville residents want local officials to reconsider how and where Marcellus shale drilling can occur before the industry sets up shop in the municipality. Members of the Citizens for the Preservation of Rural Murrys ville

asked council last week to postpone any decisions about drilling — including whether to solicit offers to drill under Murrys ville Community Park — until municipal drilling regulations have been revisited. Board member Linda Marts said the group's board of directors wants council to establish a task force to revisit the municipal ordinance. That is in the works, chief administrator Jim Morrison said. Murrys ville resident Alyson Holt — who, along with the preservation group, plans to circulate a referendum petition to help council determine if the park's gas rights will be leased — agreed that revisions are needed. “Much has been learned in that time,” Holt said. “Municipalities now have both the constitutional right and the public-safety obligation to enact zoning ordinances that protect their citizens' constitutional rights to clean air; pure water; and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.”

Murrysville takes an unusual approach to drilling decision Murrys ville officials next month will vote whether to solicit bids for the gas rights under more than 260 acres at Murrys ville Community Park. But rather than to decide to accept any offer on its own, municipal council has encouraged residents to develop a referendum question to put the future of drilling under the park to a public vote in November. Typically, that decision is left up to elected officials, said Mike Hillebrand, chief operating officer and vice president of Monroeville-based Huntley & Huntley. His company works primarily in eastern Allegheny County and throughout Westmoreland County and stands to profit from receiving approval to drill. This is a first time he has seen community officials consider putting a drilling lease out for a referendum vote. “We elect our officials to make better decisions,” said Hillebrand, a Murrys ville resident. “This just bogs the wheel down. We elect council to make those decisions.” That's what happened in North Huntingdon, where commissioners last month agreed to a 10-year lease with Huntley & Huntley. The deal netted the township nearly \$440,000— \$1,600 per acre — for the oil-and-gas rights under Braddock's Trail and Oak Hollow parks. “I don't want to say it was easy, but to be honest, other than negotiating the terms of the contract, the decision was relatively easy,” said Richard Gray, president of the township commissioners. “We knew drilling was going to take place any ways, even if we didn't sign the lease.”

Letter: EPA choking supply News coverage about electric bills that tripled has not asked what caused the spot price to rise so dramatically. Most stories assume a lack of price regulation. Cold weather increasing demand and a shortage of supply caused the price to rise. Our supply of electricity is diminishing because our federal regulators are shutting down coal-fired generators — not because they are dirty, but because they make too much carbon dioxide. High energy prices are a result of insane regulations that limit supply, not of regulators being unable to regulate the price. Carbon dioxide is a trace gas essential for the circle of life on Earth. Mother Nature makes 95 percent of greenhouse gas, mostly by ocean vapor. Current CO2 at 400 parts per million could climb to 500 ppm and we would increase plant yield and lower water demands naturally. More CO2 means higher plant yield with less water. The Chinese know this and have no intentions of limiting plant food. Why should we? Imagine a world where man-made plant food was no longer considered pollution and climate change was a function of solar cycles and not politics. Limiting man-made CO2 is a spectacular hoax that limits life, liberty and our power choices. EPA rules limiting CO2 are federal tyranny and will lead to power shortages and much higher prices for everything. When our highly educated liberal friends accept that they have been had on CO2 and the circle of life, they may ask what else they were lied to about.

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA

White House 'welcomes' natural gas exports The White House has affirmed its support of American natural gas exports as Europe seeks to reduce its dependence on Russian energy supplies. Energy is playing a major role in the conflict in Ukraine. The European Union has denounced Russia for annexing Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and is now looking to the U.S. to strengthen its position. Until now, the Obama administration has been cautious when it comes to exporting liquified natural gas (LNG) to countries it doesn't have a free trade agreement with. The U.S. Department of Energy is required to approve of such deals to make sure they're in the public's best interest. But in a joint statement Wednesday, the White House and the European union said they "welcome the prospect of U.S. LNG exports in the future since additional global supplies will benefit Europe and other strategic partners."... The Marcellus Shale is poised to play a role in the global LNG market. The high production of natural gas in Pennsylvania has produced a glut which caused prices to drop and drilling to slow down in some of the state's gas fields. The industry hopes exporting Marcellus LNG could stabilize the market. Recently, a Maryland appeals court ruled in favor of a plan by Dominion Resources to export Marcellus LNG from an existing import terminal at Cove Point to India and Japan. The plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Energy back in September and awaits final approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

U.S. Census Bureau: mining is fastest-growing sector of economy Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction are the fastest-growing sectors of the nation's economy, according to a report released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. The federal agency publishes an economic census every five years. This report examines national data from the year 2012. The previous economic census looked at 2007— before the recession hit. "In that five year period, this sector grew by 26.4 percent," says Census Bureau statistician Andrew Hait. "More than half of that big increase in that entire sector was in the oil and gas sub-sector." The report also shows a 27 percent increase in the number of oil and gas jobs nationally— 191,580 for the year 2012. "There were about 41,000 more people working in the oil and gas industry in 2012 than there were in 2007," says Hait. The most recent numbers from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry show approximately 30,000 people working in the six "core" oil and gas industries the state counts. The U.S. mining sector also showed the highest percent increase in the value of its products, according to the Census Bureau. The sector is up about 33 percent— or about \$141.6 billion. "When we look at that increase, the lion's share of that is in the oil and gas extraction sub-sector," says Hait. "We're curious to see how this increase was distributed. We know Pennsylvania, Texas, Oklahoma and other states are very strong in this industry." Later this year the Census Bureau plans to begin releasing a series of more detailed economic reports— broken down by state, county, and city.

ALTOONA MIRROR

Chemical safety becomes focus of neighborhood watch In January, July and September of 1996, this area experienced damaging floods, the memories of which haven't drained away in the 18 years since. So it might be surprising that when emergency management planners in Blair County put together their first federally mandated hazard vulnerability assessment last year, they chose chemical releases as the No. 1 risk. On Tuesday, at this year's first Blair County-wide neighborhood watch meeting, guest speaker Dan Boyles, county emergency management director, showed why with maps depicting the 77 hazardous chemical sites with radius rings that

show the extent of the risk for the most dangerous substance at each site. The City of Altoona's map looked like the path traced by an Olympic figure skater's long program. Then there are the 164,000 chemicals that pass through the county by rail or roadway every year. The county has been lucky, but there have been close calls, contained by the companies where they occurred and first responders, according to Boyles.

DELAWARE COUNTY DAILY TIMES

Civil trial for unpaid Marcellus Shale bills gets under way MEDIA COURTHOUSE — What is expected to be a lengthy civil trial involving millions of dollars in allegedly unpaid bills for pipeline work related to Marcellus Shale drilling got under way Wednesday before Judge Charles Burr. Conshohocken-based Utility Line Services Inc. claims it is owed \$17,718,804 in unpaid invoices and more than \$7.8 million in lost profits and unreimbursed costs from PVR Marcellus Gas Gathering LLC, according to a complaint filed in the Delaware County Common Pleas Court. Attorney Bruce Ficken, representing ULS, said in an opening statement that the disputed payments involve work ULS did in laying 17 miles of 30-inch natural gas pipeline for PVR as part of a three-phase project in Lycoming County. Ficken claimed PVR was contractually responsible for obtaining permits and rights of way to perform the work. The contract provided that ULS would be granted an extension beyond the original completion date of Dec. 31, 2011, if it experienced delays, according to Ficken, and the end date was later extended five months under a contract revision. Ficken said the project began to get off track in September 2011, during the second phase of work, due to unexpected environmental factors and delays with PVR obtaining certain required permits. He said PVR pushed for overtime and weekend hours, as well as standby crews, despite ULS warning of increased costs. Ficken claimed PVR oversaw and approved the work ULS was performing, but began to slow down on paying invoices in Oct. 2011.

HARRISBURG PATRIOT NEWS

Natural gas vehicle workshop to be held by the DEP The state Department of Environmental Protection, along with the Eastern Pennsylvania Alliance for Clean Transportation, will hold a natural gas vehicle, infrastructure and incentive workshop 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. April 29 in the Commonwealth Room of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex. According to the state Department of Environmental Protection, the workshop will include a panel of experts talking about how natural gas is helping Pennsylvania move away from imported petroleum fuels to "homegrown environmentally friendly alternatives." DEP staff will provide information on the financial incentives available to help make the switch to compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas. Manufacturers will demonstrate alternative fuel vehicles and technologies. Cost is \$25 including lunch. Registration deadline is April 22. To register, go to <https://ep-act-dep-naturalgasworkshop.eventbrite.com/>. For more information, go to www.dep.state.pa.us and click on the "Natural Gas Vehicle Grant Program" button on the homepage.

LOCK HAVEN EXPRESS

Clinton Task Force gets SRBC overview LOCK HAVEN - Susquehanna River Basin Commission Deputy Executive Director Andrew Gavin provided Clinton County Natural Gas Task Force members with a concise overview of that agency's duties, responsibilities and governing of water quality at Tuesday's meeting of the local organization. The issue was important for three reasons. 1. The natural gas drilling industry has become a major presence in

Clinton County in recent years. 2. The industry uses huge amounts of water in its "hydrofracturing" process to release natural gas from the shale layers beneath the earth for eventual delivery to the market. 3. Clinton County has a vested interest in insuring a high standard of water quality for its creeks and streams - and particularly for the Susquehanna River. Gavin noted that the commission's task has become larger in recent years, and added that the agency now lists 9,843 permits for wells in the basin region, of which 3,993 are drilled and 2,634 have been actively fractured. Gavin also noted that there were 39 unconventional well pads in Clinton County at the present time, of which 173 unconventional wells have been permitted, and 68 of which have been drilled.

SCRANTON TIMES-TRIBUNE

DCNR to release drilling impact report next month HARRISBURG - A state conservation agency plans to release a voluminous report next month about its efforts to monitor the environmental impact of natural gas drilling in the state forests. The monitoring of gas drilling will continue after the report comes out, Ellen Ferretti, secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, told an advisory council Wednesday. DCNR started the drilling monitoring program in 2011, after the agency leased thousands of acres of state forest land for deep Marcellus Shale drilling in separate auctions in 2008 and 2010.

TOWANDA DAILY REVIEW

Township learns of Chesapeake plans Smithfield Township supervisors have just learned of plans for a 756,000 gallon frack water storage facility in the township. When asked for comment, Daniel Spadoni, community relations coordinator with the state Department of Environmental Protection Regional Director's Office in Williamsport, provided some details about DEP's recent action regarding the matter. "On March 13, we issued a registration approval under General Permit WMGR123 to Chesapeake Appalachia LLC-Lamb's Farm Pad for a 756,000 gallon frack water storage facility in Smithfield Township," he stated in an email. He explained that a "registration approval" is "an authorization to proceed with the proposed facility in compliance with the requirements in General Permit WMGR123 - Processing and Beneficial Use of Oil and Gas Liquid Waste." An email was sent by The Daily Review to Chesapeake Media Relations. Brittany Thomas, with Chesapeake Media Relations, responded by saying, "We decline comment on this matter." The Daily Review placed a call to the Lambs. The sons, who own the farm, were out milking, but the father, Roger, confirmed that the facility will be on the farm property and said that the sons seem "quite pleased" with the arrangement with Chesapeake. He had no other information.

WASHINGTON OBSERVER-REPORTER

Manager fired in Robinson, Washington County Recently elected supervisors in Robinson, Washington County, have voted to fire Michael E. Behrens, the full-time manager and zoning officer. Chairman Rodger Kendall and vice chairman Stephen Duran, who both joined the board in January, terminated Mr. Behrens' employment March 19. Supervisor Mark Brositz voted no. "We let him go," Mr. Kendall said after the special meeting. "We just weren't going in the same direction, is all I can say." He said the board will consider hiring a replacement. Mr. Brositz said the firing was politically motivated. "I thought [the manager] was a good guy," Mr. Brositz said after the vote. "I didn't see any reason to get rid of him." Mr. Behrens did not respond to a request for comment. He is the second manager in two years to be terminated. In August 2011,

Robinson hired its first manager, Richard A. Ward, largely to handle an influx of Marcellus Shale-related projects. In July 2012, the board replaced Mr. Ward with Mr. Behrens, a retired police officer and former zoning/code enforcement officer. Initial annual salary was \$43,000. Mr. Behrens was four months into a two-year contract that had been approved last fall by the former board, composed of Brian Coppola, Terrence Love and Mr. Brositz. The contract allows supervisors to remove the manager at any time, but if the removal is without cause, the township must pay him one year's salary and benefits, Mr. Brositz said. Mr. Kendall said he believes the contract can be voided because the majority of the board is new. "We will iron that out in the future," he said. Mr. Brositz said he and the previous board gave Mr. Behrens the contract because they were "afraid of retribution, that [the incoming board] would remove him due to past conflicts." As zoning officer, Mr. Behrens had cited Mr. Kendall multiple times for property violations unrelated to gas drilling, township officials said. Mr. Kendall said he'd been willing to work with the manager despite the past citations. "The way I look at that, Mr. Behrens was only doing what he was told by the board," he said. "It's not his fault." Since taking office, the new supervisors have acted to make numerous changes related to employees, zoning, drilling and contracts.

WILKES-BARRE CITIZENS VOICE

Cleanup of Duryea tire site nearly complete DURYEA - After more than 22 years, a longtime eyesore and health and safety hazard is finally going away for good. The tire piles at the Coxton Rail Yard, a mess since a massive arson fire at Tire Reclamation Services on Sept. 15, 1991, are in the final stages of being hauled away for recycling or disposal. Local dignitaries including state Sen. John Blake, D-Archbald, state Rep. Mike Carroll, D-Avoca, and representatives from the state Department of Environmental Protection gathered at the site near the Reading, Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad facility to check out the progress. "Unfortunately, there were piles like this all across Pennsylvania, so we are thrilled to see 95 percent of them cleaned up," said state Sen. David Argall, R-Rush Township, who made the trip from Schuylkill County on Wednesday. The legacy piles, like the one in Duryea, take the longest to clean up, he said. "Also, when you start digging into a pile that's in a hole, you don't really know how many tires are there until you start the cleanup," Argall said. The owner of the tire recycling facility, Bruce Scran, went bankrupt and the state had to take over cleanup of the thousands of tires, many of which were damaged by the 1991 fire. DEP spokeswoman Colleen Connolly said about 100,000 tires remain, which will be removed by contractor Environmental Restoration Incorporated of Courtdale. An \$89,665 grant from the state "Used Tire Pile Restricted Account" is allocated for the work, which Connolly said began in early September, but was delayed due to equipment maintenance and bad weather.

WILKES-BARRE TIMES LEADER

Area eyesore disappearing DURYEA — Long gone are the plumes of black smoke, flames and choking fumes from the massive fire nearly 23 years ago at a tire recycling site at the Coxton Rail Yard. Nearly gone too are the 2 acres of car, truck and tractor tires left on the property owned by the Reading & Northern Railroad. By next month, the site should be cleaned up at a cost of about \$1 million. State Sen. Dave Argall, R-Schuylkill County, who drafted the Waste Tire Recycling Act in 1996 that started similar cleanups across Pennsylvania, surveyed the progress Wednesday as two excavators sorted through the remaining tires, keeping the good for recycling and heaving the burned and bad for disposal. The project overseen by the state

Department of Environmental Protection marked the cleanup of 95 percent of the millions of waste tires across Pennsylvania, Argall pointed out. "That's a solid A in my book," Argall said. More than an eyesore, the piles are environmental, health and safety hazards as evidence from fires such as the one deliberately set the morning of Sept. 15, 1991, at the former Tire Reclamation Services operation on the property next to the Susquehanna River. The resources and money spent to battle such fires are enormous and the piles become breeding grounds for mosquitoes known to carry the West Nile Virus.

WILLIAMSPORT SUN GAZETTE

CAUTION URGED! Wait to burn outdoors until after rainfall, commissioners ask For those who are going to do outdoor burning, Lycoming County commissioners and the county Department of Public Safety are asking that extreme caution be used due to dry conditions - but optimally, to abstain from outdoor burning until after significant rain. Because of the conditions, the commissioners may implement a countywide burn ban next week. "We are asking all county residents and visitors to use common sense and be mindful of weather conditions when considering the burning of yard debris," Commissioner Jeff Wheeland said. "A best practice would be to refrain from any outdoor burning until after the region receives some significant rain." In addition to following local regulations on outdoor burning, following are campfire and cookout guidelines: Burn only in a fire ring or other device to contain the campfire. Make sure the fire is completely extinguished before leaving the area (stir the coals and soak the area with water). Never leave a fire unattended.

Alternative fuels touted at workshop The notion of displacing foreign oil in favor of clean, domestic energy sources seemed to be a rallying cry during a workshop on alternative fuels Wednesday at Pennsylvania College of Technology. Guest speakers gave presentations on compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, biodiesel, propane autogas and electric vehicles. Andy Rohrer, of UGI Utilities Inc., said that America is "way behind the curve," in terms of the number of vehicles in the country using compressed natural gas. "We're using 25 percent of the world's oil," he said. "But Marcellus Shale natural gas is an economically viable source of fuel for the transportation market in Pennsylvania." Rohrer's company delivers compressed natural gas to sites and directly to vehicles. "I'm the UPS guy of the gas business," Rohrer said. Echoing Rohrer's defense of natural gas was Barry Carr, business development manager for the American division of Landirengo, an Italian company that manufactures operating systems for natural gas, propane, electric and hydrogen vehicles. "Natural gas is the simplest, because it's a much stabler-priced fuel," Carr said. "If you call a diesel or gasoline provider and ask about prices for the next three years, they won't be able to tell you. But if you call a natural gas provider, they can give you a three-year estimate."

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Chances for Obama nominees to be confirmed are falling, even with over two years to go Even with more than two years left in his term, President Obama's ability to fill many of his administration's most important jobs is rapidly diminishing...A number of factors contribute to

the administration's current predicament. Senate Democrats took the unusual step in November of eliminating filibusters for most presidential nominations, but now some of their own members facing reelection are reluctant to approve nominees who have sparked outrage among influential voting blocs... Then there is Environmental Protection Agency nominee Kenneth Kopocis, who holds an Obama administration record by waiting for 1,017 days as of Wednesday. He has been working as an EPA senior adviser while the Senate considers whether to let him head the agency's water office. Earlier this month, two senior Republicans on the Environment and Public Works Committee, John Barrasso (Wyo.) and David Vitter (La.), sent a letter to their colleagues saying they should keep blocking him to demonstrate their opposition to a proposed EPA rule that would expand its control over U.S. waterways.

Consultants: Columbia Pike streetcar would bring more money, growth than bus transit A Columbia Pike streetcar would spur \$3.2 billion to \$4.4 billion in development over the next 30 years in Arlington and Fairfax counties, triple the amount that would be triggered by improving bus transit, according to a consultant's study released Wednesday. The report by HR&A Advisors said the benefits of building a streetcar line between Bailey's Crossroads and Pentagon City would far exceed the expected \$310 million cost of the project — boosting property values, new construction and tax revenue. Development encouraged by the streetcar project would result in as many as 6,600 new jobs, according to the study, which was commissioned by Arlington to weigh the costs and benefits of the project. The county has worked for more than a decade to develop a streetcar in the Columbia Pike corridor to provide more transportation options for a growing population and spur redevelopment along an aging street and community.

Letter: Better public transit infrastructure, technology is the ticket to more riders David King, Michael Manville and Michael Smart pointed out in their March 21 Washington Forum commentary, "Get on board: Transit is in trouble," that transit ridership has not kept up with population growth since 2008. They didn't mention, however, that driving, as measured in vehicle miles traveled nationally, has declined in real terms since 2008. Most likely both declines are related to the recession, but the data indicate that transit is proving more popular relative to driving. The authors also did not note that, relative to where it was 30 to 40 years ago, transit is doing incredibly well. In the 1970s and 1980s, many of our major transit systems were in a state of disrepair — especially in New York — and losing ridership.

WASHINGTON EXAMINER

White House embraces natural gas exports The White House endorsed expanding liquefied natural gas exports to Europe on Wednesday as part of a broad call for the continent to diversify its energy resources. "The situation in Ukraine proves the need to reinforce energy security in Europe and we are considering new collaborative efforts to achieve this goal. We welcome the prospect of U.S. LNG exports in the future since additional global supplies will benefit Europe and other strategic partners," the White House said in announcing U.S. and European Union cooperation on a range of issues. The proclamation comes as Capitol Hill pressure is building on the Obama administration to speed up new export approvals as possible relief for Ukraine and other Central and Eastern European nations that rely on Russia for natural gas. Republicans and some Democrats say the Energy Department is moving too slowly on export decisions regarding nations that lack a free-trade agreement with the United States. Such deals must be in the public interest, and therefore face stricter review. The Department of Energy has approved seven such

projects, with 24 pending. Still, some Democrats oppose expediting exports, as they're worried it would raise domestic energy costs for consumers and manufacturers. They also argue expanding exports would do little to help Ukraine because U.S. export terminals aren't up and running, and Ukraine has no way to import tanker-carried supplies.

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Oil train concern prompts disaster readiness survey State disaster planners are surveying northern Delaware's readiness for a crude-by-rail accident, prompted by public and emergency agency concern about risks and the availability of firefighting supplies and gear. Delaware State Fire School Director Robert Newnam noted the fast-moving plan during a House Energy Committee meeting convened in Dover late Wednesday on "Challenges Posed by Crude-by-Rail in Delaware." "We recognize that there is a concern about this," Newnam said. "This is something that's taking place now. The survey is being put together and it's being sent out; we're preparing for workshops. On behalf of the first responders, we're pretty comfortable with where we are now. We just need to tie down some loose ends." Surveys of dozens of fire companies should be completed within 30 days, Newnam said, with planning and training workshops beginning in another 30 days. "We feel it's necessary to address the issue and see what our status is," Newnam said. "Questions have been raised" about the ability of emergency services to deal with a serious train accident. Hundreds of rail tank cars now cross Delaware daily en-route to the Delaware City Refinery, where an estimated 210,000 barrels of upper Midwestern and Canadian crudes are expected to be arriving daily by the end of the year. The rail deliveries end decades of reliance on waterborne crude oil deliveries from overseas. Train delays at rail crossings and reports of derailments and fires elsewhere – including a deadly, derailment in a Quebec town last year – have turned the issue into a local political and public safety concern. Attention has been high in neighborhoods near tracks and at rail crossings used by the trains across northern Delaware, particularly in Newark, where Amtrak's high-speed passenger trains regularly pass long strings of oil cars on adjacent sidings. "The big question is: What happens if something like that goes wrong," said Rep. John Kowalko, D-Newark South, who chairs the energy panel and organized the rail session. He displayed a video of an Amtrak Acela train zooming past crude-laden tanker cars at the start of the session.

MIDDLETOWN TRANSCRIPT

Division of Fish and Wildlife advises wetland visitors on how to avoid spreading disease found in Delaware frogs Dover, Del.-- DNREC's Division of Fish and Wildlife is advising wetland visitors on how to avoid ranavirus, a disease found in Delaware frogs and known to affect amphibians, reptiles and fish. The disease can spread from animal to animal with a minimal amount of contact; one study demonstrated transmission of ranavirus to a healthy salamander after just seconds of contact with an infected individual. "The virus can also be spread via water, in soil and on the boots, nets and gear of humans," said Holly Niederriter, wildlife biologist with the Species Conservation and Research Program. Here are some ways to disinfect gear and

protect wildlife:

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

W.Va. gas industry 'an awakening giant' CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Antero Resources announced Wednesday that it will supply nearly half of the ethane needed to support the proposed petrochemical complex in Wood County known as project Ascent -- Appalachian Shale Cracker Enterprise. Company President Paul Rady told a crowd of about 70 people at the Marcellus to Manufacturing Conference going on Wednesday and today at the Charleston Civic Center that Marcellus Shale is "an awakening giant." Rady was joined by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and Odebrecht Vice President David Peebles. Odebrecht announced in November that it would explore its options in developing a petrochemical complex that would include an ethane cracker plant, three polyethylene plants and associated infrastructure for water treatment and energy co-generation. In January, Odebrecht announced that it purchased land in Wood County for the project. "We want growth, jobs and prosperity in this region," Rady said about the developments of project Ascent. Antero will supply 30,000 barrels per day of ethane under the tentative agreement. The agreement is contingent on project Ascent moving forward after a multi-year feasibility study. "It's a big step because, without this [ethane supply], you can't go forward. It's a first step. We need a pool of suppliers," Peebles said. "This is a key, critical element when you talk about manufacturing otherwise you're not going to have the polyethylene manufactures need to build."

Virginia Tech experts pinpoint MCHM odors CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Researchers at Virginia Tech believe they have pinpointed a form of the chemical MCHM that could be causing licorice-like odors to linger in the region's drinking water long after the January chemical leak that contaminated drinking-water supplies for 300,000 residents in a nine-county region of West Virginia. Using specialized equipment, experts at Virginia Tech's College of Engineering traced the odors to one of MCHM's two chemical structures, or isomers, and analyzed at what levels that form of MCHM could be smelled in the air and estimated what concentrations could be smelled in water. A team led by Virginia Tech environmental engineer Andrea Dietrich estimated the odor threshold for that form of MCHM at 7 parts per billion. That's 100 times less than the levels the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advised were acceptable for people to drink. However, the CDC's 1-part-per-million number remains controversial, and Dietrich said the continuing odor problems have their own important impacts on residents. "The toxicity aside, annoying odors have a psychological burden," Dietrich said. "Let's hope this chemical doesn't have any toxicity and the CDC is right, but if people are living with it for two or three months, it imparts a fear and a reminder, and it's a psychological burden. If you can smell it, it's still around." Dietrich is an expert on water quality and treatment, as well as on taste and odor assessments of water. After the Freedom Industries chemical leak, she received an emergency grant from the National Science Foundation to study MCHM and its potential impacts, and one focus of the Virginia Tech team is the coal-cleaning chemical's odor...The Virginia Tech findings come just one day after West Virginia American Water revealed new test results that show low levels of MCHM appear to be leaching from the filters at their Elk River

treatment plant into drinking water the company pumps into the region's homes and businesses.

Antero to supply proposed state cracker plant CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Antero Resources says it will be the anchor ethane supplier for a proposed cracker plant in West Virginia. Antero announced an agreement today to provide 30,000 barrels of ethane a day to the plant, if it's built. Brazilian petrochemical giant Odebrecht is exploring the possibility of building the ethane cracker and three polyethylene plants in Wood County. The complex would be known as Ascent, which stands for Appalachian Shale Cracker Enterprise. Antero says in a news release that Ascent would use the ethane it supplies to manufacture polyethylene. Odebrecht would lead the project's investment and financing, along with water and electric utility operations. Plastics maker Braskem S.A. of Brazil would handle petrochemical-related activities. Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin says the Antero agreement is a major step forward for the project.

Commentary: An opportunity for the GOP CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The headlines have not been kind to West Virginia this March. Charleston hotels are suffering, the new gun law could allow guns in rec centers and the pharmaceutical lobby stopped an effort to cut back on meth labs. It feels like 1979, but instead of President Jimmy Carter's malaise speech as the highlight, we have West Virginia's questionable legislative performance. In 1979 the nation was in trouble - American hostages were in Iran, long lines and higher prices were at the gas pumps, and the trust of the American people in their national government had been broken. And all of president's men could not stop the political tsunami that would sweep Jimmy Carter and the Democrats out of Washington the next year. Legislative sessions, like March Madness, are hard to predict, but with all the problems facing West Virginia, why would our legislators support a citizen's right to carry a gun into a rec center? State senators assure us that such action was not their "intention." But why should we be talking about "interpretations" about the bills they pass? Why was this legislature unwilling to be explicit. Guns are kept out of schools, why not rec centers?

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

Marcellus Shale "an awakening beast," industry official says Antero Resources announced Wednesday it would supply nearly half of the ethane needed to support the proposed petrochemical complex in Wood County known as project Ascent -- Appalachian Shale Cracker Enterprise. Company resident Paul Rady told a crowd of about 70 people at the Marcellus to Manufacturing conference going on Wednesday and Thursday at the Charleston Civic Center that the Marcellus Shale is "an awakening giant." Rady was joined by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and Odebrecht vice president David Peebles. Odebrecht announced in November that it would explore its options in developing a petrochemical complex that would include an ethane cracker plant, three polyethylene plants and associated infrastructure for water treatment and energy co-generation. In January, Odebrecht announced it purchased land in Wood County for the project. "We want growth, jobs and prosperity in this region," Rady said about the developments of project Ascent.

BLUEFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH

Infrastructure overhaul: Good news for Bland County Work is finally underway on a new \$7 million wastewater treatment plant for Bland County. The long-awaited project has been four years in the making, and represents a critically important infrastructure upgrade for the area. Ground was broken last week on the new wastewater treatment plant. It was made possible

through various funding sources. The funding partners on the project include the USDA Rural Development, which provided \$1,134,000 in grant funds; the Virginia Tobacco Commission, \$151,286 in grant funds; Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, \$100,000 in grant funds; and \$6.5 million in low interest rate loans. In this modern day and age, it is imperative for all communities in our region to have modern water and wastewater treatment facilities. We congratulate officials in Bland County on this accomplishment. It is our hope that one day all families in our region will have access to reliable and safe drinking water and modern wastewater treatment facilities. But there is still much work to be done across Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia to make this a reality. That's why it will take continued and aggressive work from officials on the local, state and federal levels to ensure a continuation of the development of modern water and sewer infrastructure across our region.

HUNTINGTON HERALD DISPATCH

Report: Pleasants healthiest W.Va. county CHARLESTON -- Pleasants County has an inviting name. Now it has the distinction of being West Virginia's healthiest county. A report released Wednesday by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin researchers ranked the state's 55 counties using more than two dozen factors such as smoking, drinking, obesity, premature deaths, and other areas including education, access to health care and unemployment. Pleasants County jumped to the top this year from seventh in last year's study, overtaking Monongalia County, which slipped to second. Pendleton County, which was first in studies released from 2010-12, was third, followed by Doddridge, Jefferson, Hampshire, Upshur, Tucker, Berkeley and Ritchie. Putnam County slipped from seventh to 12th. Kanawha County, the state's largest, was 37th. Among local counties, Cabell ranked at 42nd and Wayne at 49th. In Ohio, Geauga County in northeast Ohio and Scioto County in the southern part of the state are at opposite ends of new state health rankings. Geauga was followed by Putnam County in northwest Ohio and Delaware County in the Columbus area. Scioto was named the least healthy, followed by Lawrence and Adams, also in southern Ohio. And in Kentucky, Oldham and Boone counties, which both border Indiana were ranked highest, while Floyd and Perry counties in the eastern portion of the state were ranked lowest. Located along the Ohio River north of Parkersburg and named after Virginia Gov. James Pleasants Jr., Pleasants County is the state's third-least-populated county with just 7,600 residents. It consists of only 135 square miles.

PARKERSBURG NEWS AND SENTINEL

Cracker Plant Antero announces ethane supplier agreement. CHARLESTON - A proposed ethane cracker plant took a step closer to reality Wednesday as Antero Resources announced an agreement to become the primary supplier for the facility Brazil-based Odebrecht hopes to build in Wood County.

WEST VIRGINIA RECORD

Cabell couple blames water company for property damageHUNTINGTON — A couple is suing the West Virginia-American Water Co. for damaging their real estate. Steven and Donna Hensley are suing the West Virginia-American Water Co. in the Cabell Circuit Court. The Hensleys filed suit Feb. 25 and claim they have suffered property damage as a result of the defendant's negligence. According to the Hensleys, they built a home on Blue Sulphur Road in Ona. Sometime after they built their home the defendant apparently put a water main at the bottom of a hill in their back yard. They say in 2012 the water main began to leak and was left leaking for weeks before it was repaired

by the defendant. Between March 2012 and May 2013 the main allegedly burst six times, causing the Hensleys' real estate to become damaged and devalued. The Hensleys say the water main was negligently located and installed, which is why it was burst so many times. They are suing for the diminution to the value of their real estate on a negligence theory. The Hensleys are seeking an undisclosed amount in damages. They are being represented by R.R. Fredeking II. The case has been assigned to Circuit Judge Christopher D. Chiles.

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

Antero Backs 'Cracker' Project WHEELING - Locally produced natural gas could eventually be on its way to the proposed Odebrecht ethane cracker in Wood County, as Antero Resources has agreed to provide about half the ethane that would be used to run the facility planned outside Parkersburg. The agreement announced Wednesday calls for Antero Resources - which leases natural gas acreage in Wetzel, Tyler, Belmont, Monroe and Harrison counties as well as elsewhere in East Ohio, north central West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania - to provide 30,000 barrels of ethane per day to the planned Ascent facility. Although officials with Brazilian petrochemical giants Odebrecht and Braskem announced plans for the project in November, construction of the Wood County cracker plant is not yet a done deal. Ascent closed on its \$10.9 million purchase of the SABIC Innovative Plastics plant, set to close by mid-2015, but the company continues to conduct feasibility studies before making a final decision on whether to build. But West Virginia leaders - who have long coveted an ethane cracker plant, which they say would bring hundreds of permanent jobs and thousands of temporary construction jobs - called Wednesday's announcement "a major step forward." "By utilizing the ethane produced here at home, we can revitalize our manufacturing industry for decades to come, bringing thousands of new jobs and billions of dollars in investments to the Mountain State," said Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin. According to Denver-based Antero, the company's ethane would be used by the Ascent facility to produce polyethylene, a key component in plastics production. "Today's announcement highlights one of the important benefits of shale gas production and demonstrates Antero's commitment to the growth of downstream manufacturing in the Appalachian region," said Antero CEO Paul Rady. "We are excited to work with our partners at Odebrecht and Braskem to help position Ascent as a catalyst for regional economic development." _

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Organization creates plan to preserve Patapsco River Valley If all goes according to plan, the Patapsco River Valley will soon become the 13th certified heritage area in Maryland. "We're very excited about this plan," said John Slater, president of Patapsco Heritage Greenway. "If we take care of what we have here, it will be better for all of us." Patapsco Heritage Greenway hosted a meeting at Relay Town Hall on March 25 to present a plan by a consulting firm that outlines the historic and natural resources of the valley, and the organization's plan for preserving them. More than 30 people attended the meeting, one of three set for the area as the group seeks community input before the plan is submitted to Baltimore County for approval. "We see the communities as very much a part of this resource," said Gary Maule, a board member of Patapsco Heritage Greenway who lives in Ellicott City. A second meeting is

Saturday, March 29, in Elkridge at 9 a.m. at Grace Episcopal Church, 6725 Montgomery Road. The third meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, March 31, at the Catonsville Clubhouse, 10 St. Timothy's Lane. As a certified heritage area, the Patapsco River Valley becomes eligible for state benefits such as matching grants, loans, tax credits and operating support. It could become eligible for state funding of up to \$100,000 every year, which could be used by the Patapsco Heritage Greenway to expand and hire a full-time director, Slater said. Under the plan, the organization would become the management entity of the Patapsco Heritage Area. "I see us as being a resource and a broker between different organizations," Slater said.

House approves \$38.7 billion state budget The House of Delegates gave preliminary approval Wednesday to a \$38.7 billion budget that trims the governor's plan but still provides raises to state workers and levies no new taxes. The House bill, scheduled for a final vote Thursday, would increase overall state spending 3.1 percent. It contains no major policy differences from the version the Senate passed two weeks ago. Both chambers made some cuts to Gov. Martin O'Malley's \$39.4 billion plan. Del. Norman H. Conway, Appropriations Committee chairman, said there was "remarkable agreement" on the budget between the two chambers, though House members did vote to restore a pair of health and economic development programs that the Senate wants to eliminate. Differences must be resolved by a conference committee and approved by the House and Senate before the 90-day General Assembly session ends April 7... The state agriculture department would be barred from spending any money on regulations limiting the use of animal manure as farm fertilizer until the state submits a report on the economic impact. Eastern Shore chicken farmers and the poultry industry have complained they would be hurt by the rules, which are aimed at reducing polluted runoff into the Chesapeake Bay.

SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

Tom Horton's vision: Why bikes are part of Salisbury's future On my way to the Barnes & Noble bookstore recently, I stopped to catch a bite at Panera Bread. In a car, I wouldn't have noticed the inviting loaves of bread through the window; I would've gone on by. But I was on a bicycle, moving at human speed and open to sights, sounds and smells. The well-documented boost to local shopping and dining from cyclists is one reason bike-friendliness is catching on, from places like New York and Los Angeles down to smalltown America. Biking's also good for your health, good for air quality, takes the edge off rush hour traffic, requires zero foreign oil and draws tourists. It doesn't just happen. The Dutch, who make more than half of all trips on two wheels, made conscious national decisions to promote and support cycling following the Arab oil embargo in the 1970s. There is every reason Salisbury could ride the growing cycling trend and make it one of our signatures. Mayor Jim Ireton and the City Council have made a good start by establishing our first designated bike routes.

ANNAPOLIS CAPITAL -GAZETTE

Feds' new rule could protect Maryland streams, wetlands Federal agencies Tuesday proposed a new rule for many of the nation's streams and wetlands in an effort to clarify which are protected under the Clean Water Act, an issue that remains in dispute after two U.S. Supreme Court rulings in the last decade. The proposed rule could provide protection to hundreds of miles of streams and thousands of acres of wetlands in Maryland alone. Anne Arundel County has more than 520 miles of shoreline and the rule could impact currently unprotected parcels with small waterways that might flow intermittently.

FREDERICK NEWS-POST

Letter: Clean water worth working for We applaud the city of Frederick for taking the next step to reduce the messy problem of pet waste (“Frederick accepts grant to combat pet waste,” March 22). We also thank the more than 100 city residents who already have taken the city’s “Scoop the Poop, Don’t Pollute” pledge. It is heartening to see local governments and citizens taking such initiative. Innovation and cooperation are critical as we all do our part to clean up local creeks, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. While some might smirk at a government program targeting dog piles, the potential for cleaner local water is substantial. Pet waste is responsible for about a quarter of the fecal bacteria pollution in streams in the Lower Monocacy River watershed, of sources scientists can identify. Rain washes the waste into local streams. Waste from livestock, wild animals and humans also gets into the water. Such bacteria pollution is troubling. A 2009 study by the Maryland Department of the Environment found bacteria readings in the 314-square-mile Lower Monocacy watershed as much as 23 times higher than safety limits for swimming during the warmer months. That’s more like toilet water than a natural stream. We believe a well-designed program to reduce pet waste can be one tool in the toolbox for reducing such local water pollution — and improving public health. The city’s program could also help dispel the myth that clean water is too expensive to achieve. Educating the public to pick up after their pets, and providing bags and receptacles to help that effort, can be relatively inexpensive. There’s no guarantee the doggie cleanup program will succeed. Changing public behavior is not easy. Surveys have found a great many dog walkers simply refuse to pick up after themselves for a variety of reasons. But it’s worth the effort. Other towns and counties around the region are launching similar efforts, not only to reduce pet waste, but to clean their streams through other innovative strategies.

MARYLAND GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS

Rockville proposes to more than double miles of cycling paths in city Rockville is gearing up to debate a proposal that would more than double the number of miles of paths cyclists can use to commute in and around the city. Ten years after the 2004 Bikeway Master Plan was implemented in Rockville, the city is proposing an updated version that would help to further improve the bicycle infrastructure. The 2014 Bikeway Master Plan recommends a few different bicycle facility types that would make riding a bicycle a safer, more feasible form of transportation in the area. While the 2004 plan already showed improvement with paths, the update would increase the reach of the system to even more destinations throughout Rockville. The city’s Department of Public Works, Traffic and Transportation Division put together the master plan with the help of other departments and input from the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Traffic and Transportation Commission. Right now, Rockville has about 34 miles each of shared lanes and of separate bikeway facilities. The proposed plan would put an additional 24.5 miles of dedicated bikeway and 18 miles of shared lanes over the next 10 years. Cost estimates are not yet available for the expansion proposal.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND NEWS

Dominion's gas export plan divides community To some in the town of Lusby, Dominion Resources is a good neighbor that provides jobs, revenue and community support. To others, Dominion is a Goliath whose plan to export natural gas from its Cove Point facility on the Chesapeake Bay could bring environmental and safety hazards. Dominion’s proposal to begin

exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) from its import facility has put the company and the tiny town at the forefront of a national debate about natural gas, a booming commodity that some say could alter the global energy landscape. The issue has created a sharp divide in Calvert County and across the state. The debate has been gathering steam since early last year, and as the wait for an oversight assessment from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) drags on, the controversy is only intensifying amid a swirl of misinformation and frustration. “I’m terrified,” said Mary Ward, who lives down the street from Cove Point. “It’s going to change a lot of things around here.” Ward and others worry about the facility’s proximity to homes and are dubious about Dominion’s safety claims. But some residents aren’t concerned. “I don’t really see a threat in it. I mean, gas has been coming in; now gas is going to come in and go out. So what’s the change?” said John Miller, a military contractor who lives off Cove Point Road.

Gaithersburg gears up for possible bikeshare program Glossy red bikes might soon be rolling into Gaithersburg streets, parks and plazas. The Gaithersburg City Council is considering expanding the Capital Bikeshare program into the city. At a Mayor and Council work session meeting Monday, Anne Root, the county’s bikeshare program manager, spoke about how the program is already functioning throughout Montgomery County. Lauren Pruss, Gaithersburg’s planning division chief, followed with a discussion on how to implement the program in the city. Capital Bikeshare allows patrons to rent bikes for short trips and return them to another station. Membership fees vary based on usage time. Bikeshare users can register for 24-hour, three-day, 30-day or yearlong memberships. With more than 300 stations and 2,600 bikes already in use, the program serves Washington, D.C., Arlington, Alexandria, and parts of Montgomery County.

Charles County Sheriff's Office COPS coordinates cleanup event On Saturday, March 15, Cpl. Travis Yates of the Charles County Sheriff’s Office Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Unit coordinated the cleanup of a large amount of trash and debris dumped in a common area on Gerard Court in Bryans Road...

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

The birds are back in town: Ospreys on the Anacostia After a sunny vacation in South America, the iconic ospreys are coming home to the Chesapeake Bay. Of particular interest — at least to bird-deprived city dwellers — are the ospreys that have for years made their home in D.C. along the Anacostia River. The birds come back like clockwork around March 15 each year, and this year was no exception. But that doesn’t mean bird watchers will see them at their nests quite yet. Daryl Wallace with the Earth Conservation Corps said the ospreys often take two to three weeks to return to or rebuild their nests after arriving in the area. Wallace said he’s seen that the birds are in the area on the electronic tracking system, but he hasn’t seen them in person yet. This is the second year that the ECC has been able to track the birds during their winter migration with telemetry devices that send signals about their whereabouts. “We’ve been working a little more on connecting technology with the environment and conservation and thought it would be really interesting to see where these ospreys go, because they come back every year,” said Kellie Bolinder, ECC’s executive director.

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Henrico planners OK new packaging plant The Henrico County Planning Commission on Wednesday quickly approved a plan to convert a former auto parts distribution facility into a new Dominion Packaging plant and warehouse.

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Great white shark likely killed dolphins off Va. Beach VIRGINIA BEACH -- Cruising along on slick-calm Atlantic waters, Bill Pappas Jr. and some of his buddies marveled as they watched a pair of dolphins "bow ride" in front of them. Pappas shot video last week as Kyle Shipp hung off the front of the boat and tried to touch the playful animals. They had no clue of the danger that lurked below. On their way to a new fishing location about 40 miles off Rudee Inlet, they spotted a pair of dolphins floating on the surface. Closer inspection revealed that the lower rear portion of each was missing - it had been bitten off by something with large, razor-sharp teeth. "A shark, for sure," Pappas said. "I've caught hundreds of shark in my life, and I was pretty sure this was a great white by the size of the teeth marks. The chunks were bitten out completely."

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

Will EPA's proposed water rule help Chesapeake Bay, hurt farmers? A federal move to clarify protections for seasonal upland streams and riparian wetlands would reap benefits for Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake Bay, environmentalists say. But home-builder and agriculture groups counter the measure constitutes a federal "land grab" that would increase the cost of new homes and hurt farmers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers proposed the rule Tuesday to better articulate Clean Water Act protections that became "confusing and complex" under U.S. Supreme Court decisions and Bush Administration directives that curtailed enforcement. "This rule would protect the streams that feed into rivers like the James and the Potomac, and the wetlands that filter pollution from the Chesapeake Bay," Sarah Bucci of Environment Virginia has said. "If we don't protect these critical waters, we can't ensure that any of our waters are fully protected." At issue are upland streams that only flow seasonally or after a rain, which the EPA says would apply to 60 percent of stream miles in this country. About 117 million people, or one out of every three people, get their drinking water from public systems that partly rely on such streams. According to Environment Virginia, loopholes in the Clean Water Act have left 57 percent of streams and millions of acres of wetlands in the commonwealth "at risk of unchecked pollution and development" and compromised drinking water for more than 2 million Virginians.

MISCELLANEOUS

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

McCarthy Defends Water Act Proposal; Funding Block Threatened A proposal by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that would establish a new definition of waters that are subject to federal Clean Water Act protections would not affect any existing agricultural exemptions, according to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy.

McCarthy, speaking March 26 during a hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said the proposed rule does not take away “a single agricultural exemption that current exists” under federal law. The proposed rule, released March 25, would subject all natural and artificial tributaries as well as wetlands that are adjacent to or near larger downstream waters to federal Clean Water Act protections. The agencies also released an interpretative rule, effective immediately, identifying 53 specific conservation practices intended to protect or improve water quality that will not be subject to dredge-and-fill permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) asked McCarthy whether the proposed rule would require a new Clean Water Act permit to be obtained by farmers or ranchers who use other existing farming and ranching practices or who utilize one of the 53 identified conservation practices in a way that slightly differs from the definition of those practices as defined by the Agriculture Department's Natural Resources Conservation Service. McCarthy reiterated that the rule does not remove any existing agricultural exemptions and aims to provide clarity to the agricultural community. “Nobody needs to get a permit under this rule should it go forward as proposed that didn't need it today,” she said.

EPA to Loosen Requirements for Materials Burned in Boilers, Incinerators The EPA issues a proposed rule that would expand the types of materials that could be burned in boilers or solid waste incinerators under less strict Clean Air Act requirements. Under the proposed rule amending the February 2013 nonhazardous secondary materials rule, construction and demolition wood, paper recycling residuals and creosote-treated railroad ties would be regulated as fuels rather than as solid wastes.

EPA Begins to Address Biomass Emissions in Permits After Court Decision The EPA's Environmental Appeals Board partially remands an air pollution permit for a waste-to-energy facility in Puerto Rico after it fails to account for greenhouse gas emissions from biomass. The Energy Answers Arecibo LLC permit is one of the first to be required to address emissions from biomass in the wake of a 2013 federal appeals court decision vacating an EPA rule that exempted biogenic greenhouse gases from the Clean Air Act's prevention of significant deterioration and Title V permitting requirements.

EPA Urged to Apply TSCA Consistently in Final Rules for Six Mixtures Chemical manufacturers are urging the EPA to apply Toxic Substances Control Act policies consistently to both biobased and petroleum-based chemical mixtures as it finalizes a proposed rule that would restrict uses of six chemicals designed for renewable fuels. The rule is one of several cases where the EPA could regulate biobased chemicals more stringently than the petroleum-based compounds they are designed to replace or supplement, an industry official tells Bloomberg BNA.

EPA Administrator Defends Handling of Fraud Investigation of Official EPA Administrator

McCarthy defends her decision to defer action on the case of former EPA senior air official John Beale until the agency's independent investigative body reviewed the situation. McCarthy, speaking during a hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, says that although it "took a while" to fully investigate Beale's travel and pay fraud at EPA, the agency's Office of Inspector General effectively pursued the issue with an investigation that resulted in a criminal conviction.

GREENWIRE

FEDERAL AGENCIES: Official portraits cut off after furor over lavish spending An oil portrait of ex-U.S. EPA chief Lisa Jackson hangs in a hallway outside of Administrator Gina McCarthy's office at agency headquarters. But the uproar over the hefty price tag of that portrait and others means McCarthy won't be getting federal cash for a portrait of herself -- at least not for a while. Tucked inside the bill to fund the government for fiscal 2014 is language to bar spending on paintings of government employees -- including agency chiefs, the president, the vice president and members of Congress. The prohibition will last only as long as the spending bill -- which runs out in October at the end of the fiscal year. But the ban could be extended as lawmakers have seized on portrait spending as a waste of money. That means agency heads like McCarthy, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and senior lawmakers would have to find cash elsewhere or forego official portraits. Government officials have long used federal funds to commission portraits of themselves. Agency halls are adorned with former secretaries and administrators, and the likenesses of current and former lawmakers hang on the walls throughout Capitol Hill. The furor over portrait costs was sparked in late 2012 when the *Washington Times* reported that the government shelled out at least \$180,000 for official portraits in a year, including nearly \$40,000 on Jackson's.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

House moves to block Obama coal rule WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans on Tuesday approved a bill that would prevent the Obama administration from imposing a stream-protection rule for coal mining that government experts say would eliminate thousands of jobs. The administration rule is intended to replace Bush-era regulations that set up buffer zones around waterways and were aimed chiefly at mountaintop removal mining in Appalachia. The House bill would reinstate the 2008 rule, which was thrown out earlier this year by a federal court. The House approved the measure, 229-192. Ten Democrats joined 219 Republicans in favor of the bill. The White House has threatened to veto the bill, saying it limits states' ability to tailor safeguards to their own needs and wastes millions of dollars adopting a rule that has been vacated by a federal court. The House bill mirrors a measure approved in 2012 and is unlikely to be taken up in the Democratic-controlled Senate.

LEXINGTON HERALD LEADER (KY)

Commentary: No federal agency protects citizens from *mining*: Court decision frees Corps of obligation "It's not our job." That's the Army Corps of Engineers' response to claims that the agency failed its obligation to consider the impact on human health when it issued a permit for an Eastern Kentucky mountaintop removal mine, Leeco Inc.'s Stacy Branch mine. Nearly two dozen peer-reviewed studies have found that residents near mountaintop removal mining areas have higher rates of cancer, mortality and birth defects. Though concern over these studies has been mounting for years in the coalfields of Appalachia, no federal agency charged with

regulating mountaintop removal mining has bothered to examine the evidence to determine whether its regulations adequately protect public health. "It's not our job." The National Environmental Policy Act requires federal agencies to assess the impact of activities they permit on the environment and the people who live in that environment. In its defense to a lawsuit brought by Earthjustice, Sierra Club, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Appalachian Mountain Advocates and Appalachian Citizens' Law Center, the Corps claimed it was responsible for determining only the public health effects of damaging streams, not of the mountaintop-removal mining operation that causes the damage. The burden for determining that, said the Corps, falls on state regulators who issue the mining permits. But the state regulators in Appalachia have been saying "It's not our job" for years, too. We brought this case on behalf of Kentuckians living near this proposed mine because we think our federal laws and regulations are clear. Even when state and federal jurisdictions intertwine, federal agencies are responsible for assessing the full impacts of their permits, including those on the communities surrounding them.

NEW YORK TIMES

Letter: An EPA Rule on Water We have a serious water problem in this country. The Environmental Protection Agency gave 55 percent of our stream and river miles a poor rating, meaning that more than half of our flowing waters may be unfit for swimming, fishing or drinking. But contrary to a suggestion by Representative Lamar Smith of Texas, the water rule will not be the "largest expansion of E.P.A. regulatory authority ever" ([news article](#), March 13). This [rule](#) restores protections to streams and wetlands that were already in place for decades. The E.P.A., in its rule issued on Tuesday, made it clear that it will not be coming after farmers' ditches. The agency's announcement of the regulations said: "The proposed rule is limited to clarifying current uncertainty concerning the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. ... it does not propose changes to existing regulatory exemptions and exclusions, including those that apply to the agricultural sector." The rule simply clarifies the scope of jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, ending years of confusion and restoring fundamental protections to waters that serve as the drinking supply for 117 million Americans.